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JAZZ

A pop-jazz-ethnic blend

GLOBAL

Continued from Page G2

"If all these people at Lincoln Center define me as not being jazz, well, that's all right. I've never been a Wynton-basher in the sense that if he wants to develop jazz as repertory music, fine. But new music has lost funding at the expense of Lincoln Center."

While Europe has a deep history of arts funding, "that's just dried up in the States," said Ribot, who's grown his European audience in recent years. "Like many musicians involved in new music, not necessarily jazz, I'm glad that the European definition of jazz is a bit wider. The American definition seems more conservative, tied closely to its roots, whereas Europeans take in the white avant-garde.

"But I don't want to entirely romanticize the European relation with jazz. It has its set of negatives too."

He tells of driving into a gas station on tour in the north of France. "They had a little CD store, like in the States, only three were Louis Armstrong CDs, Billie Holiday, even Howlin' Wolf albums – there was a better jazz selection in this gas station than there'd be in the average record store in many parts of the States. But directly across the aisle were a bunch of clay figurines of Louis Armstrong with a big pestle, wiping his brow with a handkerchief, the kind of crass racial caricature – the 'Happy Negro' – that we haven't seen much of in the U.S. since the riots of the 60s.

"I thought, 'Wow, this is strange, what's going on here?' I kept going back and forth between the good CD selection and these crass figurines. I thought, in a way, I've spent a lot of my life between these two things."

Much of the Euro pop-jazz-ethnic hybrid can be "just enjoyable," said Ribot. "There's not much there that you can call earthshaking on the level of say A Love Supreme, but then neither was Brother Jack McDuff."

Jazz globalization works in strange ways. Chill specialist Moiveer outgrew the ascetic aesthetic of ECM, the Munich label launched in 1969 to "certify" American progressive jazz. Its founder, Manfred Eicher, wound up winning this year's Grammy – as best classical producer.

Consider ECM's role in the sweetly adventurous gallops of clarinetist Gianluigi Trovesi and accordionist Gianni Coscia, where tradition meets the avant-garde and what was once considered "old-fashioned" becomes revelatory.

Trovesi, a leading light in the colourful poll-winning Italian Instabile Orchestra and Coscia (who was a lawyer for 30 years, before his 1983 recording debut) were recorded by small Perugia label Egea in 1995's Radici (or "Roots").

As critic Vittorio Franchini noted, this music "accepted nostalgia, even certain traces of provincialism ... restoring it to our times with fresh language, often filled with ironies, acidic ious sarcasm but also authentic passion."

Although Radici went through 10 printings, it took ECM's clout, with the 2000 release In Cerca di Cibo, complete with an essay by semiotics star Umberto Eco, to put them on the North American map.

Eco recalls hearing Coscia play in the post-war years in their provincial home town of Alessandria, near Milan. He played folk tunes and American standards in a way that turned them upside-down. That, says Eco, was his first contact with "jazz."

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COURTESY OF THE JAZZ FESTIVAL

Norah Jones, daughter of Ravi Shankar: tradition meets avant-garde and what was considered "old-fashioned" becomes revelatory.

THE SHOWS

Some of the artists in this article are performing at the Montreal International Jazz Festival. Here's where and when.

June 28
Tabla Beat Science, 6 p.m., Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts, $35.50 to $45.50.

June 28
Vienna Art Orchestra, 10 p.m., Salles du Gesù, $29.50.

June 28
Nils Petter Molvaer with DJ Alain Vinet, midnight, Club Soda, $25.50.

June 30
Richard Galliano, 6 p.m., Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts, $28.50 to $38.50.

June 30
Eivind Aarset with Electronique Noire, 10 p.m., Salles du Gesù

July 1
Orquesta Aragon, 6 p.m., Spectrum, $32.50.

July 5
Rabih Abou-Khalil, 6 p.m., Théâtre Maisonneuve, Place des Arts, $29.50 to $39.50.

July 5
Trilok Gurtu, 6 p.m., Spectrum, $29.50.

July 6
Marc Ribot, 8 p.m., Salles du Gesù, $27.50.

July 6 and 7
Norah Jones, 7 p.m., Club Soda, $35.50.

Ticket prices do not include tax or service charges; they're available from the Spectrum, 318 Ste. Catherine St. W. at concert venues, or through Admission, (514) 790-1245 or (800) 361-4595 or www.admission.com.

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